



Department of Justice

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District of Delaware

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FBI RECOVERS FRAUDULENT ANDREW WYETH WATERCOLOR PAINTING

"Wreck on Doughnut Point"

United States Attorney David C. Weiss and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Supervisory Special Agent Tricia A. Gibbs announced today the recovery of a watercolor painting entitled "Wreck on Doughnut Point", pictured below, purportedly by iconic American artist Andrew Wyeth.



The recovered watercolor painting is a fraud. In 1998, a Connecticut gallery contacted Andrew Wyeth concerning the same watercolor painting, bearing Mr. Wyeth's signature. Mr. Wyeth examined the painting and determined that it was not his. Nevertheless, the fraudulent painting re-entered the stream of commerce, ultimately being purchased by an art dealer in California in 2000 for approximately \$20,000. In late 2008, the art dealer contacted an auction house in Texas to sell the watercolor on consignment. The auction house contacted the Brandywine River Museum. The curator of the museum recognized the watercolor as the fake that Wyeth had inspected in 1998 and contacted the FBI Art Crime Team. Following investigation, the painting was recovered.

The actual painting was painted by Andrew Wyeth in 1939. Mr. Wyeth died in January 2009.

United States Attorney David C. Weiss said, "This investigation demonstrates our commitment to addressing the problem of the illicit sale of fraudulent art, a multi-million dollar criminal enterprise. Recovery of such fraudulent art is a major objective of our law enforcement partner, the FBI Art Crime Team, whose investigative efforts I applaud. We have now succeeded in removing the fraudulent painting from commerce, which we hope will help protect the legacy of an important American cultural figure. I commend the Brandywine River Museum for bringing this matter to the attention of the FBI Art Crime Team. Our office will continue to vigorously investigate and prosecute art crime in the future."

This case is being handled by David L. Hall, Assistant United States Attorney. For further information, contact Assistant United States Attorney Hall at (302) 573-6277.

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